



**US Army Corps
of Engineers**
St. Louis District®

News Release

Release No. 01-04

Contact: Alan Dooley
(314) 331-8002

For Release: **IMMEDIATE – January 16, 2004**

1222 Spruce Street, St. Louis, Missouri 63103-2833

Media Advisory

Who: Dr. Samuel “Billy” Kyles
What: Speaking at Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Program
Where: RAY Federal Building, 1222 Spruce Street, 2nd Floor Auditorium
When: Wednesday, January 21, 2004 at 10 a.m.

Believed only living witness to Dr. King’s Assassination to speak in St. Louis

St. Louis, Mo. – Dr. Samuel “Billy” Kyles, widely believed to be the only living person to have been with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., when he was assassinated, will be the guest speaker at a St. Louis observance of the slain civil rights leader’s life and legacy, Wednesday, January 21, 2004.

Kyles, who has served as pastor of the Monumental Baptist Church in Memphis since 1959, is himself a recognized leader in the nation’s ceaseless quest for equal rights. He has been invited to speak about the movement and Dr. King in a program being hosted by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, St. Louis District. His address will take place in the 2nd Floor Auditorium, the RAY Federal Building, 1222 Spruce Street (intersection of Spruce and Tucker, across from Police Academy).

In the days leading up to Dr. King’s tragic murder, Kyles played a pivotal role supporting striking Memphis sanitation workers seeking better pay and working conditions. In efforts to gain community support for the workers, he organized rallies, raised money and scheduled a major rally on April 3, 1968.

Seeking to add national support for the city workers’ plight, Kyles invited Dr. King to come to Memphis to address that April 3, rally. The nation’s top civil rights leader accepted the call and delivered his now-famous last speech that fateful evening, titled: “I’ve Been to the Mountain Top.”

The following day, while standing on a second floor balcony of the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Dr. King was tragically struck down by an assassin’s bullet – ending his life, but not that of the American civil rights movement. Dr. Kyles was at the dying Dr. King’s side when this visionary leader was taken from our nation and has been one of the nation’s driving forces for equal opportunity.

In concert with other presenters, Dr. Kyles will help the assembled Federal workers to better understand the vital contribution that Dr. King bequeathed to Americans of all races, religions and origins, and guide them to rededicate themselves to continuing his work and dream.

- 30 -

Editor’s note: We invite media coverage of Dr. Kyles and the event. Due to security measures at the RAY Federal Building, arrangements must be made in advance. Contact Army Corps of Engineers public affairs at 314-331-8002, 8068 or 8095, by Tuesday, January 20, to ensure access is properly arranged.